Running Meeting Activities

When you get a meeting activity under way, the first thing to do is to remember what you are trying to achieve. Keep the purpose of the activity in mind when you run some of the following commonly used meeting activities.

- ▪ *Presenting*

Although in most meetings you probably want to keep presentations to a minimum so that you can capitalize on the energy of the group, presenting is still an important way to get information across. Some tips for giving an effective presentation in your meeting include:

- review your presentation objectives
- relate the content to the meeting objective
- vary the pitch, rate and volume of your voice
- maintain an appropriate pace
- avoid using fillers
- enunciate clearly and distinctly
- use familiar terms and expressions
- maintain eye contact.

For more on giving presentations, see "Effective Presentations Skills", *Office of Government Training*.

- ▪ *Discussing*

Use discussion to gather information and opinions from participants. The following guidelines will help:

- Make sure participants are familiar with issues and topics under discussion. If they don't know the topic, they can't have a productive discussion.

- Moderate, don't dominate. Open the discussion and then invite participation from the group.

- Intervene only to interpret points, to handle disruptive or dominating participants, to encourage quiet participants, and to restart a stalled discussion.

- When appropriate, summarize points made. Restate major points.

- ### *Brainstorming*
  Use brainstorming sessions to generate new ideas. Follow these steps to unleash participant creativity:

  1. Announce the brainstorming ground rules:

     - All ideas will be accepted.
     - Discussion of suggestions comes later.
     - Suggestions will not be criticized.

  2. Set an achievable goal and a time limit, for example, 30 ideas in 30 minutes.

  3. Announce the topic or problem. An effective way to get people started is to state a question. For example, "How can we save money in State Government?"

  4. Keep a written record of ideas on a flipchart. Because ideas will come hard and fast, alternate notetakers.

  5. Get everyone involved. If someone is dominating the discussion, ask that person to take notes. If someone is being quite, encourage his or her participation.

  6. When ideas start to come slowly, review what you have to stimulate more ideas.

  - ### *Problem Solving*
    Use the following process to conduct a useful problem-solving session:

    1. Clearly state the problem.

2. State why the problem must be solved.

3. Ask participants to state causes of the problem.

4. Ask participants to offer solutions to the problem.

5. Ask participants to determine the best solution.

6. Ask participants to plan implementation of the solution.

- ▪ ***Decision Making***
There are two forms of group decision making: either a majority, or a consensus. A consensus is ideal, but consider how much time it may take to reach. Determine before you start what kind of decision you want to reach.